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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the development of higher education and evaluates the changes being introduced at universities and university colleges in eastern Germany. The paper discusses: (1) a brief outline of higher education in the new German states; (2) main aspects of the socially essential changes; (3) the basic character of the changes; (4) the establishment of autonomy by the former East Germans; (5) the reorganization of initial and further training; (6) the reform of research carried out at universities and university colleges; (7) the development of contacts with establishments of higher education abroad; and (8) changes in the structure and running of higher education. Contains an 18-item bibliography. (GLR)

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Dynamic changes in higher education in Eastern Germany

As is generally known, the peaceful revolution in East Germany (whose official title was the German Democratic Republic) in autumn 1989 led about a year later to its absorption by the Federal Republic of Germany. One of the consequences of this was the complete reorganization of the education system in Eastern Germany. The changes being carried out at universities and university colleges are designed to establish a uniform system of higher education in Germany.

I would like to present a thorough analysis of the development of higher education and an evaluation of the changes being introduced at universities and university colleges in Eastern Germany. This will make it possible for us to successfully continue the changes so necessary for society, as international experience in this field provides us with valuable lessons.

This presentation will thus include the following aspects:

1. a brief outline of higher education in the new German states according to selected criteria;
2. the main aspects of the socially essential changes;
2.1 the basic character of the changes;
2.2 the establishment of autonomy (one of the tasks currently facing us);
2.3 the reorganization of initial and further training;
2.4 the reform of research carried out at universities and university colleges;
2.5 the development of contacts with establishments of higher education abroad;
2.6 changes in the structure and running of higher education.

Naturally, it will not be possible to take into account all the changes which are taking place; we will have to restrict ourselves to those which are of most significance.

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1. A short outline of higher education in the new German states according to selected criteria

In 1990, just before the country ceased to exist, there was a total of 54 establishments of higher education in 25 places in the former German Democratic Republic representing a total of 270 subject areas (1). The territorial distribution of these universities and university colleges varies quite considerably - there are seven in East Berlin, six in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, four in Brandenburg, nine in Sachsen-Anhalt, six in Thüringen and 22 in Sachsen. A degree of concentration appears to be necessary. New Fachhochschulen (short cycle institutions of higher education) are to be founded.

Only four universities currently have between 10,000 and 15,000 students - the Universities of East Berlin, Halle, and Leipzig, and Dresden Technical University. All the other establishments of higher education have 1000-5000 students. As a result, a large north-south gap can be observed, and higher education appears to be concentrated in Berlin and Saxony.

Only about 13% of people in the Eastern part of Germany begin studying in higher education, whereas the figure for West Germany is 26% (2); the number of those entering higher education in East Germany must therefore be increased. On the other hand, however, these figures do not appear to take the number of distance students in this part of Germany into account; it has been shown that these students in East Germany also complete their studies within the required period of time. The reasons for this are to be found in the limited number of those allowed to enrol, the school-like nature of studying, and the intensive help given to students - factors which applied until recently in Eastern Germany (2).

The staffing of universities and university colleges in Eastern Germany can be described as excessive. Whereas, the student-teacher ratio is 5:1 in Eastern Germany, the figure for West Germany is 20:1; a desirable ratio would be 10:1 or 12:1.

It should not be forgotten, however, that until recently, teaching staff in the East German higher education system were constricted by ideologically chosen compulsory subjects and research projects which led to little or no international progress or recognition (2). In addition, two thirds of the senior academic staff currently working in higher education will reach pensionable age within the next ten years, and there are not sufficient younger staff to replace them as older people also dominate among the permanent non-professorial teaching staff.

The main aspects of the socially essential changes

As was prescribed by the 1990 German Treaty of Unity, laws dealing with the reform of higher education in Eastern Germany ("Hochschulerneuerungsgesetze") are being drafted and will be presented to the respective Federal State Parliaments in April 1991 (3); in addition, attention should also be paid to a proposal drawn up by a working party made up at the University of Leipzig. The application of these new laws will be supported by a programme designed to promote higher education in the new Federal States ("Förderprogramm") (2).

2.1 The basic character of the changes

As a consequence of the unification of the two German states, the main task of the reform is to bring two different systems of higher education and academic research together (1). In doing so, we must also take the dimensions of European science and education into account; in fact, we must develop universities and university colleges with a European flavour and with European acceptance, which are capable of creatively competing with the rest of Europe (4). However, it is not enough simply to more or less critically follow the West German model (5).

The fundamental condition for the development of our univer-

sities and university colleges must be the granting of the autonomy of science, research and teaching; in addition, they must be run again according to democratic principles.

The type of initial and further training on offer in higher edcuation must be tailored to the development and requirements of Europe, as well as to the social needs of Germany as a whole. Initial training, further training and research must carry equal weight in this process.

In future, graduates will be needed who have a sound knowledge of their field, who have social competence, and who can display a high degreee of responsibility and intellectual mobility. They will naturally also require an active knowledge of foreign languages in order to be able to freely communicate and co-operate with others throughout Europe, and to have a good chance of starting a career at a relatively early age (4). Within the transfer to an ecologically aware social market economy, and in correspondence with the regional situation, further training is not only aimed at professional specialization; what is more important is fundamental requalification.

Pure research must again be carried out in particular in the proper place, i.e. at universities. What is needed here is successful research of international significance with an increased contribution to theory - in other words, a higher degree of efficiency. Applied research will also continue to exist alongside pure research, although it must be limited to some degree. In addition, we must also try to establish the effective interweaving of university research with research carried out externally, and with social practice (1).

In addition, we must try to raise the competitiveness of the single European market, which will come into effect at the end of 1992, by looking to Eastern Germany's intellectual potential. This requires promoting the freedom of movement of academics and students. One way of doing this is participation in the various European programmes of cooperation, for example ERASMUS, Tempus, Lingua, ESPRIT, BRITE, and EURERA. Eastern

Germany's traditional cooperation partners in Central and Eastern Europe will also be included in these schemes.

The new profile of universities and university colleges in eastern Germany also affects the democratization of their running and the development of their structure.

Useful personal experience gained in the past should also be employed to help these fundamental changes to be carried out, although at the present a degree of uncertainty in connection with this is apparent.

Let us now take a more detailed look at how the basic aspects presented above are being put into effect.

2.2 The establishment of autonomy (one of the current tasks facing us)

When we talk of autonomy, we refer to both external and internal autonomy. Whereas external autonomy refers to political and legal features of the existence of the university, internal autonomy refers to academic freedom, i.e. the freedom of research and teaching (6). Both are naturally interconnected.

There are still different positions as far as external autonomy is concerned. The new Federal State Governments have not yet constitutionally guaranteed the right of universities to autonomy or the freedom of the sciences, and the authority of the Governments will be determined by the Guidelines for Higher Education ("Hochschulrahmengesetz"), once they have been passed by the respective parliaments. These guidelines should be of a purely outlining and coordinating nature (7). However, as the main financial supporter, the State government will also have the right to supervise the university and appoint certain members of staff; it will also have the right to intervene in the academic running of a university as it is a public body. If the university wants to be an institution integrated into society, it will have to accept the constitutionally-based condition that it must be a centre of research and education which meets the needs

of society, and that it will accept the supervision of examinations at the end of profession-oriented training courses based outside the university.

The internal autonomy of the university can be seen in the fact that it can nurture science and the arts within a process of free research, teaching and studying. Various officials and committees will be elected, and these will then present the university or university college with a constitution so that its work can be regulated.

These changes being introduced were strained by the decision of the five new Federal Governments taken in the winter of 1990-91 to close down ("abwickeln") whole faculties and departments at Eastern German universities and university colleges. This led to a storm of protest being made (including by rectors) and to the picketing and occupation of universities by the stustudents. In the meantime, the refoundation of those faculties which were closed down, but which are necessary for the universitas litterarum, is being prepared, although their founding deans were all appointed by the State Ministries without consulting the respective universities or university colleges.

What is thus required is an awareness of responsibility when dealing with the question of autonomy as a whole.

2.3 The reorganization of initial and further training

The most important thing to be considered in the discussion of higher education in Eastern Germany since the beginning of the 1990s is the reorganization of initial and further training. As a result of the changed profile of graduates of higher education and the necessity of their acceptance throughout Europe, the aims, content and structure of their initial training and their later further training must also be altered.

One thing which is useful in the redesigning of courses as far as their content and structure is concerned (particularly those courses which were previously 'strained' under the influence of

ideology) is "adapting to the international organization of these courses". This makes the courses comparable with those on offer at universities and university colleges in what used to be West Germany (2).

We require open, differentiated courses that can cope with the variety of backgrounds people entering higher education have, which also allow different sorts of graduation, and which encourage the development of the students' individuality. In addition, courses encompassing both specialist and interdisciplinary aspects are desirable.

In general, we are aming at a theoretical, complexly organized, broad general education, oriented towards basic vocational capabilities and creative work, and which provides a long-term basis for one's profession and postgraduate further training.

A pluralistically oriented studium generale (general studies course) should also be included in future, to promote the political and social competence of the future intelligentsia and in particular theoretical and methodical thinking, but which is also oriented towards practical changes. However, such general studies courses are currently the subject of controversial discussion.

In just the same way, the introduction of students to relevant aspects of information technology and computing bearing in mind the needs of their own particular field is as essential as it ever was.

The strengthening of foreign-language teaching, especially English and French, is also necessary at the level of higher education.

The enabling of all students to carry out independent work of a scientific or scholarly nature was and is an increasingly important pillar of higher education, and it should continue to be oriented according to the use of the sciences in one's job. This is equally valid for education in areas of specialization connected with research, in which the undergraduate dissertation

can be expanded upon.

As studying is greatly influenced by the type of assessment and evaluation employed, this must be organized in such a fashion that it stimulates active, responsible studying and guarantees the reliable evaluation (including self-evaluation) of the formation of the student's personality and his/her professional abilities.

As we fundamentally reorganize training in main subjects, we also want to especially promote training in subsidiary subjects.

The system of higher-level distance education will also be continued for people who want to study part-time while working. However, some changes will have to be made as students will only be able to work at home and attend consultations in the evenings and at weekends; there will also be more courses employing television and computer teaching with personal communication.

Close cooperation with the West German FernUniversität in Hagen, which is opening centres for the study of economics, the social sciences and law at selected universities, is being prepared for this. In order to expand short cycle higher education ("Fachhochschulbildung") in Eastern Germany, the Akademikergesellschaft für Erwachsenenfortbildung (in English: the Academic Society for Adult Education; also known as AKAD), which is based in Stuttgart, has opened its first study centre in Leipzig.

If we want to break away from the system of the past by giving far more responsibility to the universities, faculties, teachers and students themselves, organizing higher education as a process of cooperation between teachers and students and enabling them to work together with people from other disciplines and from industry etc., then we have to make the targets students have to attain as flexible as possible. Teachers must be allowed to develop their own teaching programmes, while students must be able to form their own curricula by composing courses made up of lectures, seminars and exercises chosen from a wide range on offer in a list of lectures (Vorlesungsverzeich-

nisse), paying attention to their own interests and particular talents and abilities.

In this way we will be able to break away from the old, narrow system of the prescribing of teaching and studying plans. Syllabuses are now appearing in a modified form for teachers in higher education. One could also follow what is now current practice at many universities and university colleges in West Germany, e.g. Kassel University, which functions on the basis of state regulations for diploma examinations and study regulations which lay down the aims of study, the requirements, the contents of the course, and the structure of degree courses, as well as practical training and the forms of assessment to be used (8).

It should be noted that a system of advice-giving for the students is required. They should be advised on how to work out their own curriculum, and their ability to study and achieve good results will then be supported by the teachers (9).

Postgraduate further training, introduced in Eastern Germany in the 1970s, is also going through further development.

Further training in higher education for the increased number of higher education graduates (currently 1,7 million, or 20,5% of the workforce in Eastern Germany) will be developed in connection with research and training with a complex interdisciplinary orientation. It is worth noting that new demands arise from the further training requirements of Germany as a whole.

So far further training has been concentrated on problems of the development of society as a whole and of industry. The long overdue expansion of the choice of the humanities and cultural sciences will now take place.

New demands are being made on further training at university, which must make provision for those who have been laid off as various branches of industry are closed down (10).

Short courses are especially popular as their flexible nature allows them to be quickly adapted to concentrate on themes and

topics which are particularly important at the time. Post-graduate studies enable graduates of higher education to specialize in something else which will be of use to them in their work. The Interdisciplinary Seminar (INTSEM), currently in existence at Leipzig University, can be seen as a prototype of the further training of staff working in higher education. The course involves talented young staff being qualified in areas of innovation in week-long courses.

For the adequate planning of further training so that it comes up to the demands of further training, the extremely close cooperation of universities with their various partners in agreed establishment of each further training project should be retained in the interests of the planned further training of graduates of higher education working in practice, as well as in order to secure essential external funding (Drittmittel) for universities and university colleges.

Thus it is that the development tendencies of society and science will be met by increased opportunities for further training.

2.4 The reform of research carried out at universities and university colleges

The orientation towards the increased development of pure research at universities and university colleges results from the fact that, in the introduction of the social and ecological market economy, which still poses many problems, completely new economic and technical solutions will be required in the future. The subordination of research to the medium- and even short-term interests of research partners, which also led to a change of course to applied themes, and which was permitted in the past, must be quickly overcome. This is also necessary because the partners from industry and other social spheres withdraw from cooperation and thus financing as a result of their new profile. In addition, university research should be strengthened in its

fundamental areas by the involvement of research groups from academy institutions (1).

It has also been recommended that closer attention must be paid to international research trends. This should also take place in view of the decision of the European Community in April 1990, which laid down guidelines for the Community's activities in the field of research and technological development from 1990 to 1994 (11). As is widely known, the decision concentrates on industrial, communications, material and information technology, and environmental, energy and biological science, and the use and mobility of intellectual resources are of equally high importance.

New organization forms of scientific work are equally significant, as they are important for an increase in the level and effectivity of research. The aspects which should be mentioned include the transfer to the planning of projects corresponding to the respective task, the provision of scientists with scope to use research potential for new scientific areas, the application of modern, reliable systems of scientific information and documentation technology, the improvement of territorial research cooperation and the ability of universities and university colleges to take part in the international cooperation (1).

However, new methods of research cooperation and the transfer of research findings are only arising slowly. The advisable expansion of scientific and methodological centres, of technological centres ("Technika") (there are currently 26 in higher education), of higher education and industry research groups, and the construction of parks of technology to support the foundation of new enterprises seem to have a promising future (1).

Finally, the changes at universities and university colleges should also be accompanied by research carried out by experts in the field of higher educational didactics and teaching methodology.

Eastern German researchers want to consistently live up to

these demands, especially bearing the Europe of the future in mind.

2.5 The development of contacts with establishments of higher education abroad

A new stage in the development of relations with establishments of higher education aborad with universities and university colleges in Eastern Germany has begun, now that they belong to the Federal Republic of Germany and are fully integrated into the process of European cooperation. One of the requirements of the present time is that these contacts be used to the full.

The present and in particular the future requirements of scientific, technical and cultural development in Europe must thus always be taken as a basis for all moves in this direction. Thus it is that the main matter of concern at all establishments of higher education in Eastern Germany must consist in achieving compatibility with European models of initial and further training, as well as attaining the cooperation and integration skills required for participation in European research. This process should include forward-looking traditions and experience. The above-mentioned research and education programmes will be used to enable the realization of the joint strategies for the innovation, education and research policies of the European Community, and innovative models of cooperation in research on higher education level are to be developed (12).

In order to apply this basic orientation in initial and further training, the mobility of both students and teaching staff must be developed. The network for its intensification is also being used by us, and the aim is to raise the quality of initial and further training at those universities and university colleges which are participating in this. Teaching staff work as guest lecturers at other higher educational establishments, and students take part of their course or even complete their studies at partner universities. Thus it is that we will

have teaching staff and graduates available who have their own personal experience of intracommunity cooperation. Appropriate schemes would seem to include the joint Europe-wide development and testing of teaching and studying plans, the organization of conferences and the like on the latest findings, and the establishment of multimedia system of distance education and further training by teachers seem suitable.

Better opportunities for student exchanges must be achieved at all universities and university colleges. German students at our universities and university colleges should live and study together with foreign students, in order to prepare them as well as possible for future cooperation. In addition, students must be given more opportunities to work and study abroad. The mutual acceptance of the equivalence of university qualification must be a part of this whole process.

Research centred on key points of social and scientific development in the European Community, and which is based on the principle of the division of labour and brings higher education and industry together, is the way in which our universities and university colleges can make the utmost contribution. The relevant science and technology programmes have already been mentioned. Attention should be paid in this respect to previous positive and negative experience in cooperation with industry.

As regards the 'bridging function' which the University of Leipzig has with EasternEuropean universities, the Rector of the University, himself once a student of chemistry in the USSR, is a supporter of the continuation of this tried and tested scientific cooperation in Europe as a whole (13).

This international cooperation should be extended throughout the world in close cooperation with UNESCO, an organization to which the author has contributed for over 20 years (see 14). The carrying out of case studies, active participation at international conferences, and contributions to international publications are tried and tested methods to continue scientific

activities. The basis for the cooperation of in particular young academics and representatives of other branches of society has been broadened by the establishment of a UNESCO club in the region of Leipzig (15).

2.6 Changes in the structure and running of higher education

As has already been stressed, one result of the autonomy of universities and university colleges is their democratically organized academic self-management. From a first overview of the current situation in the fundamental changes in the running and structure of Eastern German universities and university colleges (5), which are still based on the two temporary constitutions from Leipzig and Dresden which are available to us (16, 17), the following findings can be concluded.

The documents mentioned (the constitution or basic regulations) set out details about the legal position and the tasks of the universities and their representatives (in German: "Mitglieder" und "Angehörige") and groups, and general regulations for participation and expansion, the organs and central institutions, and also the faculties, including their departments, leadership and structure.

In complete correspondence with this, the 'group principle' is being applied. The members of the university are divided into four separate groups for purposes of representation in the organs of self-management - the senior academic staff (professors and assistant professors), the academic staff, the non-academic staff, and the students. These groups are to be represented in prescribed proportions by their elected representatives in the various committees ("Kollegialorganen" und "Gremien") of the university and the faculties and institutes. As the senior academic staff bear the main responsibility for research and teaching, they will have the majority in the responsible committees; this will, however, not always be the case. Subject competence will always be linked with democratic control.

Therefore, elected committeeswill also display the results of their meetings in public and be accountable for them. In addition, the general principle which is to be applied is that of delegating more responsibility below, to those on whom the success of the university really depends.

The universities are experiencing fundamental changes in particular in their structure, although one must differentiate between central organs and structural units like the faculties and institutes.

The organs of Leipzig University include, for example, the university council (Konzil), the senate and the rector's office, whereas Dresden Technical University will remain with its slightly different university council ("Universitätsrat") and the senate with the rector as its chief representative. The supreme body of the university is thus the university council, which makes important decisions on academic development, research and teaching, and which elects the rector, the prorectors and the members of the senate.

The senate is an executive organ between the meetings of the university council and cooperates with the rector, who is, however, bound to follow its decisions. Temporary and permanent commissions can be formed byeither the council or the senate.

Whereas the Technical University is led by a rector, Leipzig University is headed by a rector's office, a group consisting of a rector, three pro-rectors and a chancellor. The rector here is primus inter pares ('first among equals'), and not just an individual leader.

Finally, representatives of various groups have also been established at universities and university colleges, which have the right to a say in the taking of decisions. These include in particular the students' council and the representatives of the junior lecturers. At some establishments of higher education, the right to participation in decisions and objection on the part of the trade unions is also guaranteed (5).

Both the above-mentioned universities also include a "Kura-

torium" whose task it is to manage the regional integration of the university.

Both universities are subdivided into faculties, each of which is led by a dean. The organ here is the faculty council. Whereas in Leipzig a faculty is made up of several subject departments ("Fachbereiche"), scientific institutes and chairs have been created in Dresden. Each subject department forms its own department council. The scientific institutes on the other hand are led by a board which in turn elects a chairperson.

Both universities naturally also possess their own academic establishments and various other units of structure.

It can be stated that at the present, experience on the altered running and structure of universities and university colleges is naturally lacking.

Those subject departments and institutes affected by the 'cuts' ("Abwicklung") are now to be constituted anew. In addition, an assessment of all staff is to be carried out to determine their suitability for their work and their personal integrity. Assessment commissions at the level of subject department etc. to which all groups of the universities and university colleges belong, are currently going about their work. However, it is not easy to determine the criteria of assessment. Finally, it will be recommended whether each member of staff should stay on or be dismissed (18). In addition, the transitionary programme with extra professorial jobs and a programme to promote younger staff will come into effect (2).

All these measures are aimed at guaranteeing the far-reaching reform and renewal of universities and university colleges with their simultaneous integration into the 'German higher education scene' and in the worldwide academic and scientific community.

Finally, I would like to thank our host for the fruitful exchange of opinions. It is precisely in phases of the revolutionary reorganization of society and higher education that a response drawn from experience to many new problems and

questions which arise every day is welcomed.

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